



# South Coast Repertory

## STUDY GUIDE

Prepared by Associate Artistic Director John Glore and  
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# RED RIDING HOOD



SCR-92626

URGENT DELIVERY



by Allison Gregory  
directed by Shannon Flynn



# WELCOME TO THE (DIGITAL) THEATRE

**T**heatre is an art form that depends on both the artists and the audience. A performance is influenced by an audience, just as an audience is influenced by a performance. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic prevents us from gathering in large groups for the time being—and therefore, we're not able to assemble as a live audience at the performance of a play.

*But, it hasn't stopped the creation of theatre. In this unprecedented time, we're pleased to continue engaging with audiences digitally—like with this filmed production of Red Riding Hood by Allison Gregory! What you're going to see is a fully staged production (the same as all of our Theatre for Young Audiences Family Series productions) that's brought to life with sets, lights, costumes, sound and a cast of actors. The only difference is that we've made a film recording of the performance in advance and are sharing it with audiences as a way to keep everyone safe.*

*We hope you enjoy, and we can't wait to welcome you back to South Coast Repertory soon!*

## THEATRE VOCABULARY

- **Backstage** The space behind the acting area, unseen by the audience.
- **Blocking** The movement onstage designed by the director and performed by the actors.
- **Box Office** A windowed space at the front of the theatre building where tickets are sold.
- **Choreography** The art of creating and arranging dances onstage.
- **Cue** The last words or action of an actor immediately preceding the lines or business of another actor.
- **Downstage** The part of the stage closest to the audience. At one time, stages were raked, or sloped, with the lower ("down") part closest to the audience, and the higher ("up") part farther away.
- **Green Room** A room near the stage where actors await entrance cues and receive guests. The room's name comes from Elizabethan times, when actors waited on a real "green" (or patch of grass).
- **Matinee** A morning or afternoon performance of a play.
- **Props** All the hand-held items and stage furnishings, including furniture, that are physically used by the actors.
- **Rehearsal** Time used by performers to practice privately before a performance in front of an audience.
- **Script** The text of the play, including dialogue and stage directions, all written by the playwright.
- **Upstage** The area of the stage farthest away from the audience and nearest to the back wall.



# THE PLAY

## THE STORY OF RED RIDING HOOD

**A**n actor named Wolfgang is getting ready to act out the story of “Red Riding Hood.” He tells us he’s going to play all the roles, and he’s going to skip ahead to the most exciting part of the story. But, just as he’s about to start, a Delivery Person walks onto the stage with a package she’s supposed to deliver to someone at the theatre. She becomes interested in what Wolfgang is doing. He isn’t too happy when she decides to join him in performing the story—especially when she insists they start at the very beginning.

Not only that, Wolfgang and the Delivery Person can’t even agree on how the story begins: he argues that Red Riding Hood is sent on a journey by her mother to deliver a delicious cake to her sick grandmother, but the Delivery Person insists that Red will take her grandmother a tureen of healthy soup. Since they can’t agree, they compromise: Red Riding Hood will deliver a loaf of fresh-baked bread with loads of butter to spread on the bread. It will be delicious—and much healthier than cake.

Now that they have settled their disagreement, they begin acting out the story, with the Delivery Person playing Red and Wolfgang playing Red’s mother. Mother tells Red to deliver a basket of bread to her grandmother, and to stay on the path and not talk to strangers. Also, she should not skip, because skipping is dangerous. Red says she’ll do as she’s told and then skips off to Grand-mama’s house.

For the next part of the story, Wolfgang takes on the role of the wolf, who stops Red on the path and tries to convince her that he’s her friend. (He also tries to convince her to open the package that the Delivery Person brought to the theatre, which is now in Red’s basket—but although she’s tempted, she refuses.) Wolf

offers to walk with Red to Grand-mama’s house, to keep her company—and then he tells the audience what he’s really up to: he plans to eat Grand-mama once Red leads him to the cottage.

But Red is in no hurry to cooperate. She decides to pick some flowers for Grand-mama. The impatient (and hungry) wolf tries to speed her along by helping her pick flowers, but then there’s a new problem: a woodcutter is cutting down trees nearby—and the wolf is afraid of the woodcutter and his sharp axe. He hurries off as Red continues to gather flowers.

Wolfgang now becomes the woodcutter, who warns Red about the wolf and gives her a lantern. “Wolves hate fire,” he tells her. Red looks for three birch trees that her mother said would point her to Grand-mama’s house, but the woodcutter confesses that he just cut down the birch trees. Fortunately, Red finds a quail who lived in the birch trees and is happy to learn that the quail knows how to get to Grand-mama’s house. Red will follow the quail.

As night draws near, Red becomes more and more nervous. To make matters worse, the wolf’s hungry growl scares away the quail. Red must now find her grand-mama’s cottage by herself—with the wolf following her closely. He tries to lure her away from the path, but Red doesn’t fall for any of his tricks.



**Delivery Person as Red Riding Hood, costume design by Amy L. Hutto.**



Wolf runs ahead and manages to reach Grand-mama's house before Red, but when he knocks on the door, Grand-mama doesn't answer at first. (For this part of the story, the Delivery Person plays Grand-mama.) Wolf finally gets into the cottage by pretending to be Red Riding Hood. Grand-mama has a few tricks up her sleeve which she uses to distract Wolf so he won't carry out his plan—but in the end, Wolf chases Grand-mama around the bed, catches her and eats her in one big gulp.

But that's only the first part of Wolf's plan: now he puts on Grand-mama's nightcap and spectacles, climbs into bed and waits for Red to arrive so he can eat her, too.

He waits and waits and waits, but Red doesn't come. Finally, Wolfgang (the actor) takes off the Grand-mama disguise and tells the audience he's going to go look for Red backstage. As soon as he leaves the stage, Red arrives at the cottage. When she finds no one home, she decides to look for Grand-mama in the garden. As soon as she leaves, Wolfgang returns and reports that he didn't find Red backstage. As Red and Wolfgang keep entering and exiting the stage at different times, they keep missing each other. After a while, Wolfgang gets so frustrated that before he exits again he takes off his wolf costume (which is actually just a pair of gloves that look like wolf paws) and leaves it on-stage. When Red returns she finds the gloves, puts them

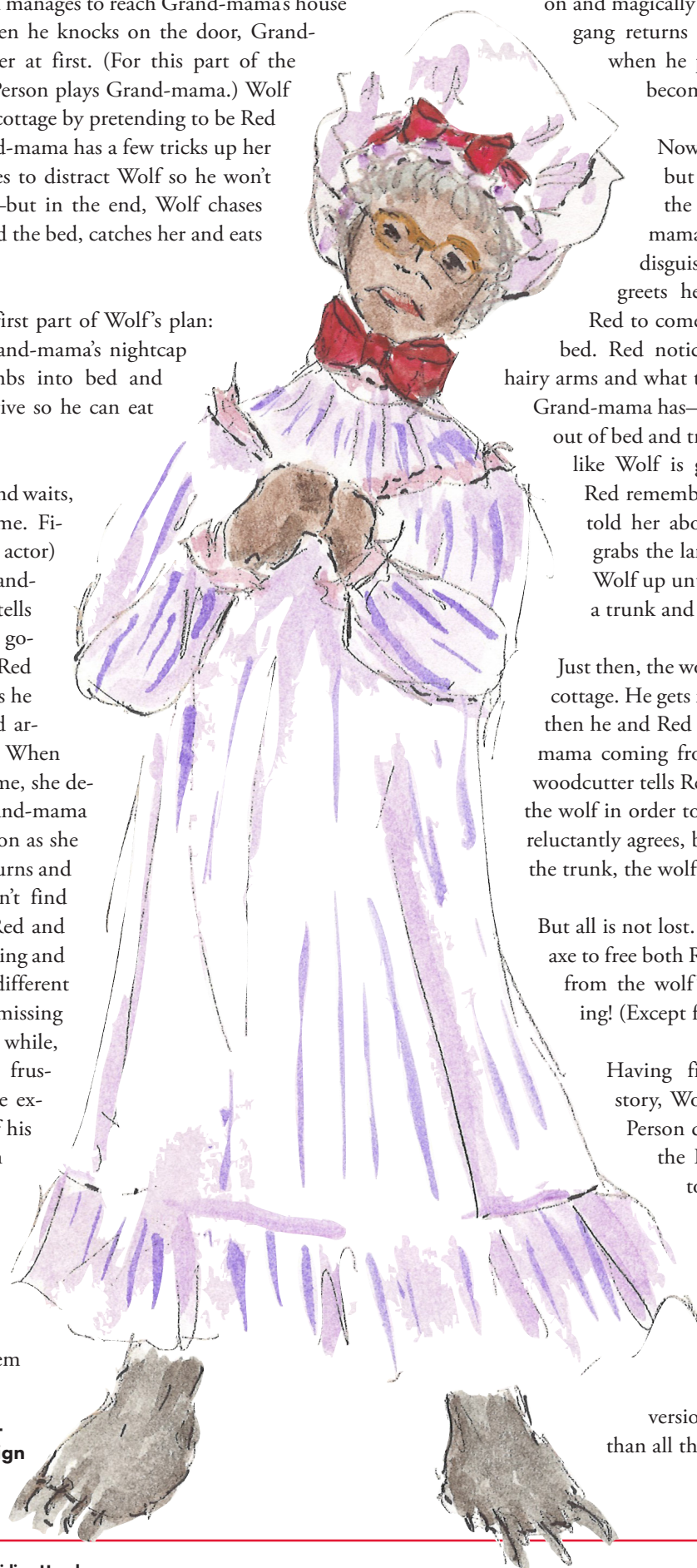
on and magically becomes the wolf. Wolfgang returns and finds Red's beanie; when he puts it on, he magically becomes Red Riding Hood!

Now they've switched roles, but they continue to act out the story. Red enters Grand-mama's cottage and Wolf—disguised as Grand-mama—greeted her happily. Wolf coaxes Red to come closer and closer to the bed. Red notices what big eyes, what hairy arms and what terrible, big, yellow teeth Grand-mama has—whereupon Wolf jumps out of bed and tries to catch Red. It looks like Wolf is going to get her—until Red remembers what the woodcutter told her about wolves and fire. She grabs the lantern and uses it to back Wolf up until she can push him into a trunk and lock him inside.

Just then, the woodcutter happens by the cottage. He gets ready to kill the wolf, but then he and Red hear the voice of Grand-mama coming from inside the wolf. The woodcutter tells Red she'll have to cut open the wolf in order to save Grand-mama. Red reluctantly agrees, but when she climbs into the trunk, the wolf manages to eat her, too.

But all is not lost. The woodcutter uses his axe to free both Red and her grandmother from the wolf's stomach. Happy ending! (Except for the wolf.)

Having finished acting out the story, Wolfgang and the Delivery Person discover that the package the Delivery Person brought to the theatre is addressed to Wolfgang himself! He tears it open and finds a cake inside! He shares it with the Delivery Person, and they happily agree that their new version of the story is better than all the others.



**Wolfgang as Grand-mama, costume design by Amy L. Hutto.**

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

## BEFORE THE SHOW

*Little Red Riding Hood* (or *Red Riding Hat* in some versions) is a European folktale that has been passed down from storytellers to story-listeners for hundreds of years in countries all over Europe (and eventually in America). Every time someone told the story, they told it a little differently, and some of those different versions were written down later by people like the Brothers Grimm in Germany and Charles Perrault in France.

1. Have students read 2 or 3 versions of *Red Riding Hood* and note the differences between them.  
(Refer to <https://www.pitt.edu/~dash/type0333.html>, a website that includes seven different versions, including Perrault and Grimm, as well as Beatrix Potter's *Jemima Puddle-Duck*, which is loosely based on the *Red Riding Hood* tale.)
  - a. Talk about the differences between the various versions.
  - b. Which version(s) do the students like best and why?
  - c. Have students think about (or write, or tell) their own versions of *Red Riding Hood*: how would they change the story and why? Would it have a different ending?
2. Have students play "Telephone": one student tells a simple story (about a paragraph long) to another student; the second student tells the story to a third student; the third tells it to a fourth; and so on. How does the story change from the first telling to the last? (The first person in the chain might want to write their story down, so they can refer to it in order to show how it has changed along the way to the final storyteller.)
3. Discuss the differences between a prose story (told out loud or written down) and a drama, and explore what it means to "adapt" a story into a play.
  - a. Have the students talk about how they

think the story of *Red Riding Hood* will be brought to life in South Coast Repertory's stage version. (It's still a stage version of the story, even though it has been filmed so the students can watch it.)

- b. What might the stage set (the scenery on stage) look like?
  - c. What about the costumes?
  - d. Will there be songs?
4. *Folktales*. Before movies and television came along, the telling of tales out loud was one of the main sources of entertainment for people (adults and children) and helped to carry on the traditions, values and beliefs that were shared by the common *folk* of a country or region: that's why they're called *folktales*. Besides *Red Riding Hood*, what are some other folktales you've heard or read or seen in a movie or on TV? (Hint: Disney has turned a lot of them into movies.)
    - a. Folktales and fairy tales (which are just folktales that include magic or supernatural creatures like fairies, giants, witches and dragons) usually include things that can't happen in real life. What are some examples of that in *Red Riding Hood*?
    - b. Folktales usually include a lesson or lessons for children (and sometimes adults). What lesson or lessons can be found in *Red Riding Hood*? What mistakes does Red Riding Hood make? What does she learn from her mistakes?
    - c. Fairy tales and most folk tales have happy endings. Is that true of *Red Riding Hood*?
    - d. Folktales usually have simple characters who are either good or bad. Who is the hero of *Red Riding Hood*? Who is the villain? Can you think of a way to tell the story so the hero becomes the villain and the villain becomes the hero? What would have to change?
    - e. Fairy tales are sometimes called wonder tales because of the wondrous things that happen in them. Can you think of modern-day stories (from movies, television, books or comics) that include wondrous characters or events?





# AN INTERVIEW WITH PLAYWRIGHT ALLISON GREGORY

*Playwright Allison Gregory is no stranger to writing plays for young audiences. In fact, SCR has produced two other Theatre For Young Audiences adaptations by Gregory—Junie B. in Jingle Bells Batman Smells! (2011) and Junie B. Jones Is Not a Crook (2018). In the following interview, Gregory chats with Associate Artistic Director and Production Dramaturg John Glore about inspiration and her writing process.*

**John Glore:** Why did you decide to create a stage version of *Red Riding Hood*?

**Allison Gregory:** I'm always looking at old stories and how they relate to today's questions and challenges; how they fit into our lives—or how our lives affect those stories. When Seattle Children's Theatre came forward with a commission, it felt like the exact right moment to explore *Red Riding Hood* and the beliefs and biases the fairytale perpetuates.

**JG:** The play sometimes has the feel of a Looney Tunes cartoon. Were those cartoons in your mind as you wrote? Did anything else inspire your approach?

**AG:** Ha, no—at least not consciously. That's just the way I think. I imagine the room inside my brain is made of rubber and feathers—it's an endless loop of pratfalls. Physical humor and wordplay are my favorite ways to communicate. Lucille Ball, Carol Burnett, Buster Keaton, Tim Conway, Dick Van Dyke, Molly Shannon, Kristen Wiig—they're all big influences in my book.

**JG:** How long did it take you to write the play? What was the hardest part?

**AG:** I was offered a great opportunity by The New Harmony Project to attend a writer's retreat; the timing was perfect to begin outlining an idea I had for the play. After 10 days in a very tiny town in southeastern Indiana in the dead of winter, I had a full first draft. There truly was nothing else to do but write.

**JG:** How and when did you get involved in doing theatre?

**AG:** I took dance lessons with my sisters when I was



**Playwright Allison Gregory.**

a kid, then got bored and stopped. When I reached high school, I got involved in the dance club, and kept dancing in college—which lead to roles in a couple of plays. From a dancer I became an actor and, much later, a writer. It seems like now people have a more deliberate plan of action. I never had a concrete plan. I had some talent and some luck; you really need both, but a plan is good, too.

**JG:** When you were a kid, did you write stories and plays?

**AG:** When I was a kid I played horses, dress-up, 'hospital' and kickball. Nothing I did then ever made me imagine I was going to do theatre, much less become a playwright. I took a very circuitous route, then landed in just the right spot—thankfully.

## AFTER THE SHOW

### Questions for Students

*Any questions or activities that can be linked to Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) have been titled in bold.*

1. How was the play different from what you expected?
2. What did you notice about the technical aspects of the show: costumes, sets, lighting and sound (including music)? How did these elements help tell the story?
3. What was your favorite moment in the play? What was the funniest part? Was it ever scary? Did you have a favorite character or actor? If so, what did you like about them?
4. How did the two actors play so many characters? How did they change when they went from one character to another?
5. How was this version of the story different from other versions you've read or seen?
6. **What's My Job?**  
In the play, Red is given the job of delivering bread to her grandmother's house. It's a big responsibility, but Red decides she is ready for the challenge. What are some jobs that you have around your house? Or what are some chores that you can help your parents with?

### 7. **Who's Afraid of the Dark?**

There is a moment in the play when the forest gets dark and Red tells us that she's afraid. But she decides to keep going and looks to the audience for some courage. Think of a time when you felt afraid. What did you do to overcome that fear? Did someone else help you overcome your fear—like the audience helps Red overcome hers?

- a. What were some of the other emotions that the characters in the play felt?

### 8. **You've Got a Friend in Me**

By the end of the play, Wolfgang and the Delivery Person become good friends and even share a cake! What are some qualities that make a good friend? What are some of your favorite things to do with your friends?

## WORDS, WORDS, WORDS!

Listen for the following words during the performance.

- **memorable:** worth remembering; remarkable
- **extravaganza:** an amazing show
- **tureen:** a deep pot for soup or stew
- **succulent:** juicy and tasty
- **perish:** to die or be destroyed
- **conflicted:** unable to decide between different choices; feeling opposite emotions at the same time
- **addressee:** the person to whom a letter or package is addressed
- **perishable:** something (usually a food) that spoils easily
- **stealthily:** in a sly, sneaky way
- **ravenous:** extremely hungry
- **toothsome:** delicious
- **spry:** energetic and fit, able to move quickly and easily
- **snafu:** a messed-up situation
- **crimson:** a deep shade of red
- **shrewd:** sly, clever—usually in a mischievous way

## WORDS SCRAMBLE

Can you unscramble these words from the list on the left?

1. uenert
2. ootemotsh
3. unsaf
4. rishep
5. wedrsh
6. aznagavartxe
7. sypr
8. emmolebar
9. sincrom
10. lensuccut

Answer key on p. 9 of this study guide.

## ACTIVITIES

1. Make up your own folktale with the following ingredients:

A young hero  
A journey with a purpose  
An animal who helps the hero  
A danger faced by the hero  
A magical character or event

Does your story have a lesson?

2. **Social Stories:** Wolf tells Red a story about being teased by his wolfpack. How did the other wolves' words affect Wolf? How could Wolf's packmates have treated him differently knowing he had trouble hunting?

In the empty comic strip panels below, illustrate two versions of the scenario. In the first, draw what happened. And in the second, draw what might have happened if the wolves were kinder.



## LETTERS OF THANKS

**G**ive the students the opportunity to write letters of thanks to SCR describing the most memorable aspects of attending a performance of *Red Riding Hood*.

**South Coast Repertory**  
**Attn: TYA**  
**PO Box 2197**  
**Costa Mesa, CA 92628-2197**



# RESOURCES

## More about Red Riding Hood

A website with seven classic versions of the folktale  
<https://www.pitt.edu/~dash/type0333.html>

“25 Versions of Little Red Riding Hood” from Mrs. Wills Kindergarten  
(a list of contemporary adaptations of the folktale)  
<https://mrswillskindergarten.com/versions-of-little-red-riding-hood/>

“The Real Red Riding Hood: Five Fun Facts!” from Storytime Magazine  
<https://www.storytimemagazine.com/news/making-storytime/the-real-little-red-riding-hood/>

## More about Folktales

From Britannica Kids  
<https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/folktale/399460>

“Why Are Folktales Important?” from August House Publishing  
<https://www.augusthouse.com/why-are-folktales-important>

## More about Playwright Allison Gregory

Official website: <https://allisongregoryplays.com/>

World Scramble answer key:

1. tureen
2. toothsome
3. snafu
4. perish
5. shrewd
6. extravaganza
7. spry
8. memorable
9. crimson
10. succulent

Wolfgang as the Woodcutter, costume design by Amy L. Hutto.

